



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

February 17, 2016

The Honorable Jeb Bradley, Chair
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
State House, Room 100
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SB 452-FN, requiring certain state agencies to conduct an audit of laws governing coastal regions to enable authorities to take appropriate actions.

Dear Chairman Bradley and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 452-FN, which would require certain state agencies to conduct an audit of regulations and policies as they relate to coastal hazards. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) supports the bill and recommends that it be amended to include a requirement for the filing of one or more interim reports.

The New Hampshire Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission (Commission), of which NHDES is a member, was created in 2013 by the Legislature in order to consider key scientific research on current and future coastal risks and hazards and to recommend legislation, rules and other actions. The Commission has worked diligently on both fronts over the past two and a half years. The Commission created a Scientific Advisory Panel (Panel) to review available scientific information about coastal hazards and flood risks in New Hampshire. The Panel analyzed the latest published data on historic trends and developed projections for the years 2050 and 2100 for sea-level rise, coastal storms and extreme precipitation. The Panel's findings were summarized in a peer-reviewed report (see attached two-page summary of the report). The Commission's diverse membership, including seventeen municipal representatives, state agency officials, and insurance and realtor representatives, has developed a draft set of recommendations, one of which is the activity proposed in this bill.

NHDES has already begun undertaking the type of work that this bill would require. As part of its 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, NHDES created a Department Climate Initiative (DCI) in 2013. The goal of the DCI is to identify potential improvements to the department's outreach activities, grant-making, and regulatory programs that will allow NHDES to minimize and be more responsive to changing climatic and associated environmental conditions. Under the auspices of the DCI, each bureau in the department is in the process of identifying potential actions that could be taken to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and prepare for the impacts of a changing climate. NHDES is committed to continuing this work as it relates to the proposed legislation as well as serving as a model for other state agencies.

After communicating with representatives of the other agencies named in the bill, NHDES suggests amending SB 452-FN to include one or more interim reports on the progress toward completing the

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required audits. Interim reports will demonstrate that the agencies are making progress as well as affording the consideration of interim recommendations.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this bill. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Steve Couture (steven.couture@des.nh.gov or 603-271-8801) or me (thomas.burack@des.nh.gov or 603-271-3449).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas S. Burack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Thomas" being the most prominent.

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Sponsors of SB 452 -FN: Sens. Watters, Stiles, Fuller Clark; Reps. F. Rice, Borden, Cushing

